

J. Tenet. A reporter referred to Minister of Defense Binyamin Ben Eliezer of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Remarks to the Cattle Industry
Annual Convention and Trade Show
in Denver, Colorado**

February 8, 2002

Thank you all very much. It's great to be here. Thank you very much. Well, thank you very much. I'm really honored to be here. I really appreciate my new hat. *[Laughter]* I'm looking forward to wearing it in Crawford. I don't get to spend enough time there, but when I do, I really enjoy being around the cows. *[Laughter]* I find it such a relaxing place, a place to stay in touch with what's important in life. And Laura and I love what we do. We love our new address. *[Laughter]* But I can assure you, when it's all over, we're going back to the ranch.

I want to thank my friend Lynn, for inviting me here. And thank you all for such a warm greeting and giving us a chance to come. I'm here to share with you some thoughts about our Nation, how to improve our economy and the strength of our character.

You know, I gave a State of the Union the other day, and I reminded the Nation we're at war. We've got tough economic times. We're in a recession, but our Nation has never been stronger. And someone who has shown incredible strength and calm during a time of national crisis has been my wife, Laura. A lot of it has to do with the fact that she had a great mom and a wonderful dad. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that she was born and raised in the West. People around the country are now figuring out why I married her. A lot of them are trying to figure out why she married me. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate so very much traveling today with our Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman. Ann's doing a really good job for the country. You know, one of the things that concerned me a lot is to make sure that hoof and mouth never made it into our land. I talked to Ann a lot about it. I said, "Whatever

you do, you make sure we stop it." And she did, along with a lot of other good folks who work for the Agriculture Department. I'm proud of her efforts. I'm proud of her genuine concern about the farmers and ranchers of the country, and I appreciate her strong leadership.

I'm proud to be traveling with Members of the United States Congress who understand the importance of agriculture in the life of our country. One such man is a guy from west Texas. In 1978, I ran for the very seat he holds. I lost. He won. *[Laughter]* He's the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, a really good friend and a good man out of Lubbock, Texas, Larry Combest.

And we brought some other Members along: from the great State of Kansas, Senator Pat Roberts; Craig Thomas of Wyoming. I'm spending the night in his State tonight, in Jackson Hole. They tell me it's quite a spectacular place to look at. He said, "Don't worry, Mr. President. The high is going to be about 9." *[Laughter]* But I'm really looking forward to it. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate so very much, as well, fine Senators from the State of Colorado, Wayne Allard—I hope Wayne comes back up there; he's needed in Washington, DC—and Ben Nighthorse Campbell.

I've spent a lot of time with this other Senator, roaming around Iowa. It seemed like everywhere he went, he said, "You know, old Joe owns this 160 acres, and he farms soybeans." And then we'd go down the road a little bit, and he'd say, "That's where Harry lives; he farms corn." This guy knows more about agriculture in the State of Iowa and more about Iowa than it could possibly be imagined. He's a fine, fine leader. He's the head of the Finance Committee at one time—I'd like to get him back to be the head of the Finance Committee—and that's Chuck Grassley.

This State has got an excellent Governor. I'm proud to call Bill Owens friend. He knows what he's doing. I think the people of Colorado appreciate his leadership—Governor Bill Owens. We've got another Member from the United States Congress with us from the State of Colorado, Tom Tancredo. Thank you for coming, Tom.

And finally, on the way to Wyoming, we're going to stop in Utah. [*Laughter*] I'm really looking forward to opening the Olympics. It's going to be a magnificent moment for Utah and our great country. And traveling with us today are the two United States Senators from Utah, Senator Bob Bennett and Senator Orrin Hatch. Thank you all for coming.

I appreciate being with people who love the land and appreciate open space. I realize there's nobody more central to the American experience than the cowboy. But cattle raising is not only a big part of America's past; I view it as an incredibly important part of America's future. This Nation has got to eat. [*Laughter*] It's in our national security interests that we be able to feed ourselves. Thank goodness we don't have to rely on somebody else's meat to make sure our people are healthy and well fed.

I appreciate so very much the fact that the cattleman usually doesn't spend a lot of time asking something from the Federal Government, except for perhaps lower taxes. But one message that all of us on this stage heard loud and clear was this: "Let us pass our assets on from one generation to the next. Let us make sure my son and daughter is able to ranch the land that has been in my family for a long time."

I'm proud to report that finally—finally enough Members of Congress, including the chairman of the Finance Committee, understood the punitive nature of the death tax, and we've sent it on its way to extinction. But to make sure we finally put it where it belongs, to put the death tax to death, we need your help in making sure the Senate and the House hears that the tax relief we passed last winter must be permanent.

One thing I appreciate about cattlemen and the cattlemen, the families that ranch our land, is the values, the values represented right here in this great hall, the values of hard work, of faith and family, the values reflected in the determined attitude of American cattlemen, values that frankly represent a part of the American spirit, values that are incredibly important for our Nation to uphold during a time of national testing.

And make no mistake about it, this Nation is being tested. You know, when the enemy hit us on September the 11th, they must have

not figured out what we were all about. See, they thought we weren't determined. They thought we were soft. They obviously had never been to a national cattlemen's convention before.

Now what they're finding out is this great land is determined and patient and steadfast and strong to defend freedom. We've been called into action. History has called this Government and our Nation to action to defend freedom. And make no mistake about it, that's exactly what I intend to do.

I intend to find the killers, wherever they may hide, and run them down and bring them to justice. They think there's a cave deep enough. They're wrong. They think they're going to run out of patience. They are wrong. Those who hurt America and those who continue to want to harm America will not be able to escape the long reach of American justice.

I'm sure there's many out in the audience today who have got a relative who serves in the United States military. I want to tell you how grateful we are for the sacrifice and the honor the military has brought to the United States. I sent them on a tough mission, and my, have they made us proud. We haven't been at this very long, but we've accomplished a lot in a short period of time.

As you remember, I laid out a doctrine for our foreign policy that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists." And the Taliban found out what that meant. Our military not only upheld the doctrine, but in so doing, I'm proud to report, we liberated a people. We have freed women and children from the clutches of one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind. I'm so proud of the United States military.

And we're just beginning. Afghanistan is the first theater in the war against terror. This Nation cannot afford and must not rest until we have done everything in our power to rally our coalition and rid the world of terror.

That not only means those who are associated with the terrorist networks of global reach; it also means nations which develop weapons of mass destruction aimed at destroying America and attacking our friends and our allies; nations that have had, as a

result of their past, have shown us clearly that they hate freedom, they hate transparency, they hate rule of law; nations which, if they were able to couple their mad designs with global terrorism, would threaten our children and our children's children's future. I will not let it stand, and neither will the United States of America.

And so I sent a budget to the United States Congress. I'm proud to report all of them on the stage are with me on this one. It's a budget that increases our monies for security, significantly increases defense spending. Those who wear our uniform deserve the best, the best training, the best equipment, another pay raise. The price of freedom is high. The price of security is high, but this Nation will pay it.

I want you to know it's a huge honor to walk in the Oval Office and sit at a great desk in magnificent surroundings. But now my job has changed after 9/11. Every morning, I walk in and read threat assessments to the United States of America. The enemy would still like to hit us, but you need to know that we're doing everything in our power to prevent it.

I'm proud to report that the FBI is well managed by a man named Robert Mueller and a great team. We're still interested in spies. We're still after white-collar crime. But the primary focus of over 4,000 FBI agents is my primary obligation, which is to protect the American people, protect American families from another enemy attack. We're running down every lead. We're following every hint. We're chasing down every opportunity to make the country safe.

I also want you to know that the Nation is developing a homeland security strategy. That's important. It's important not only for the short term, but it's important because after we implement the strategy, America will be better off for the long term. For example, preparing against a bioterrorist attack, we're spending a lot of money to make sure the Nation's health care system can communicate better, public health works better, that there's medicines available if there were to be an attack. Much of the research and development that's going on to make America better secure against bioterrorism could con-

ceivably lead to cures for diseases that have plagued us for a long period of time.

We've got money in our budget to make sure our first-responders, the heroic policemen and firemen all around the country, have got better equipment and can better communicate. As a result of hardening the homeland against bioterrorist attack with first-time responders, our neighborhoods will be ultimately safer for crime.

We're making sure our borders are more secure. We want to know who's coming in, and we want to know who's going out. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to be a hospitable nation. On the other hand, we want to make sure if people have overstayed their welcome, that they're welcome to leave. *[Laughter]*

And we're worried—and I talked a lot today to Senator Roberts about this subject, and to Ann Veneman—we're concerned about making sure our food supply is safe. We're investing in training and technology at the Department of Agriculture to detect biological and chemical weapons and agents. We're going to have an even swifter response to food contamination. We've tripled the amount of money in the budget to prepare America against the very worst.

But you need to know, we're doing everything in our power. We're on alert. We're wise. We're learning more about the enemy. We're looking. But the way to make sure America is secure in the long run is to find them, hunt them down, and get them. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

We're going to make sure we do everything in our power to win the war on terrorism. And we're going to defeat the recession, too. I'm deeply concerned about those who lost their jobs as a result of September the 11th. There's a lot of people hurting in the country, and our Government must respond.

I appreciate the fact that the Senate passed a bill to extend the unemployment benefits for those who have lost their work, and the House has already done so. It makes a lot of sense for the Government to respond in that kind of way. But the people in America who have lost their jobs, they don't want an unemployment check for the long run; they

want a paycheck. And the best think Congress needs to do is ask this question: How do we create more jobs? How do we invigorate the private sector to create more jobs so people can find work?

I know some of them over there—up there decided that the stimulus package is dead. The leadership in the Senate said, “No, we can’t get anything done.” I respectfully disagree. It seems like to me that we ought to focus on what’s best for the country, work together, and get a package which provides stimulus for job creation. We want to take care of the people who lost their work. We also want to invigorate the job-creating mechanisms of the United States of America so that people have jobs so they can put food on the table. We can’t let politics dominate Washington, DC. We need to set aside our parties and focus on what’s right for the country.

And part of making sure we’ve got a healthy economic outlook is to have a healthy agricultural sector. Our farm economy, our ranchers and farmers provide an incredible part of the Nation’s economic vitality. I mean, if you’re not vital, the Nation’s economy will suffer. A lot of Americans have got to understand this, that food and fiber accounted for nearly \$1.3 trillion of gross domestic product in the year 2000; \$1.3 trillion of our economy came from farmers and ranchers and all the people associated with helping people raise crop and raise beef. And so we’ve got to make sure that our farm economy is strong.

The farm economy employs nearly 24 million people. That’s a lot. And therefore, when we work on the farm bill in Washington, we must understand that we’ve got to have a good bill that not only enhances our Nation’s security by making sure we’ve got ample food but that we—by having good farm policy, good agriculture policy, we can help create jobs all across America.

And so I want to talk to you quickly about the farm bill. One bill passed the House; one bill looks like it’s getting ready to pass the Senate. It will go to what they call conference, and we’re going to work hard to get a good farm bill out. I’m really looking forward to working with Larry Combest and the conferees in the House, as well as looking

forward to working with the conferees in the Senate, to get a bill that meets these principles.

First, I want farm policy that is generous in our appropriations and affordable. Now, we’ve agreed that our farm bill should cost \$73.5 billion over the next decade. My administration will honor that agreement. I know the folks on this stage will honor that agreement. It looks like that’s pretty well settled in, and that’s good for the farm sector. But we’ve got to spend the money without—I guess you could call it political gimmickry.

You see, what we don’t want to have happen is, they take the bulk of that money and spend it early, so that in the out years the farm economy suffers. What we want is to make sure that when the bill is passed, that the \$73 billion is spent evenly or relatively evenly over the decade. In other words, to put it bluntly, what we don’t want to do is overpromise to farmers and underperform. What we don’t want to do is use the taxpayer’s money to try to cobble together a loose coalition to get votes early on which will ultimately hurt the agricultural sector of the United States of America.

A good farm bill must provide a safety net for farmers, without encouraging overproduction and thereby depressing prices. By setting loan rates too high, we could easily worsen a problem that loan rates were supposed to correct. I favor farm policies that strengthen the farm economy over the long run, policies that promote independence. But what I don’t want to do is to provide incentives into the marketplace that will hurt farmers. And so we’ve got to have good loan policy, and I look forward to working with the Members on the stage to provide that.

I want a farm bill that supports trade. Oh, I know there’s a lot of controversy around America on trade. Let me tell you how I look at it. Our ranchers and farmers are the best in the world at what they do. We can grow crops better; we can grow things better; and we can raise beef better. And if that’s the case, it seems logical to me that we want a more—want more opportunity to sell that which we’re best at, all around the world. We want people in China eating U.S. beef.

No, I know there’s some skepticism. People are always saying, “Well, you know, every

President comes along and he talks about agriculture, and then when it comes time to negotiating international trade agreements, they seem to forget.” Well, so far, our administration hasn’t forgotten. I told the people who are interested in this subject, when I was campaigning, we were going to make sure agriculture remained at a cornerstone of U.S. economic policy, not only at home but internationally.

I sent a team over there, with Ann and Zoellick, to talk to the Chinese. And I—just look at the record. There’s huge amounts of opportunity for American farmers and ranchers in that vast market. There’s been some discussions about world trade, and look at the record: The United States stood strong when it came to protecting the agriculture interests. We want to open up markets, and at the same time, we want to make sure others open up their markets for us and to make sure that we open up markets in places like Europe for America’s healthy beef.

You can help by making sure the Senate hears that message, that the Senate passes a trade promotion bill which gives me the authority to work hard to open up markets all around the world for those who work hard. I need that authority. It’s good for America to have that authority. It’s also going to be good for the world, because America’s great producers will help feed the hungry.

I also want to make sure the good farm bill establishes farm savings accounts to help farmers and ranchers manage risks that you run. I understand how risky agriculture can be. It wouldn’t be so risky if we could control the weather. That’s one of the things we haven’t figured out how to do yet. It wouldn’t be so risky if we could make it rain all the time; there’d be hay to feed the cows. Somehow, that doesn’t happen all the time. I know. I sat through the—as Governor, I watched the rains go away in the great State of Texas for many of the months in my last years as the Governor. You know, I’m a guy who runs out to my land or thinks about my land, and the first thing I ask old Kenneth who lives on it is, “Did it rain? Where’s the water?” But I understand the risks.

And there’s a risk of price, and the cycles make it difficult. But I think the Federal Government can help mitigate the cycles by

giving farmers and ranchers the opportunities to establish what we call farm savings accounts or ranch savings accounts. We’ll give you a chance to insure against risk. It makes a lot of sense. I know that Senator Grassley has been a big promoter of farm savings accounts, and we look forward to getting this additional tool to you all to be able to help you help yourselves.

A good bill finally will offer incentives for good conservation practices. Let me tell you exactly what I think about the land and how best to manage it. Every day is Earth Day for people who rely upon the land to make a living. The best conservation practices happen because somebody realizes that it’s in their benefit, their own economic interest, to practice good conservation in order to raise cows, for example.

I was traveling the ranch one time with Vladimir Putin and Mrs. Putin, and we’re driving around, showing it off. I’m a windshield rancher. *[Laughter]* And they were asking, “Well, can you”—I was explaining like I like to cut down—trim the new-growth cedar, because the new-growth cedar sucks out a lot of water from the—from the beautiful hardwoods we have. Many of you know exactly what I’m talking about. It enhances the beauty and the value of the land if you can get rid of the new-growth cedar. It enables our beautiful native pecans or live oaks to flourish, and that’s good for the country. And they said, “Well, you’re allowed to cut down your own trees?” I said, “Yes, if you’re wise about it.” And obviously there are some county restrictions, and of course, I pay attention to all that. But, yes, we—*[laughter]*—we trust people to—we trust people to manage their own land. We trust people with their own land.

And they said, “Well, that’s different in some places in Europe. You can’t do that.” And I said, “Well, here’s what we think in America. We think that the collective wisdom of those who own their land is a benefit to the Nation, that when individuals make proper choices because they own their own property, that all those decisions in a collective way makes better environmental policy, better land use policy than if it was dictated from a central source of people, many of whom have probably never been on the land.”

And so this farm bill has got to recognize the principle I just outlined and help ranchers and farmers. I strongly favor expanding EQIP program. I think it makes a lot of sense. Good conservation policy in a farm bill will enable ranchers and farmers to make better decisions. It's an important part of the farm bill, and I hope the Senate hears that. And I know the folks on this podium agree, on the stage agree with the principle inherent, and not only in that aspect of a good farm policy but the other four I described. I just want to assure you all that these just aren't opinions of mine; these are commitments of mine, commitments to good agriculture policy.

And so we're, as a nation, are dealing with some tough times, but I've never been more confident or optimistic. I think it's because I know the true strength of the country, and the true strength of the country is our citizens. We're a land of strong, hard-working, compassionate people.

I'm asked all the time, "What can I do to help in the war against terror?" Well, you've probably figured it out by now that I don't see many shades of gray in the war on terror. Either you're with us, or you're against us. And it's a struggle between good, and it's a struggle between evil. And if you're interested in fighting evil, do some good. And by that, I mean, show some compassion to a neighbor in need. You know, when people walk across the street to help a shut-in, they're doing some good. When people take time to mentor a child, that's doing some good. We've got children whose parents are in prison; they wonder, "Gosh, I wonder if America is meant for me?" There's a hopelessness that can creep in their lives. What America needs to do in order to fight evil is to have mentors all across the country who are willing to put their arm around a child and say, "I love you a lot. America counts for you as much as it counts for me."

No, if we want to fight good—fight evil with good, we can do so in many ways, all across America. My call to America is to help somebody in need. Many of you in this audience have probably either been or are on your school boards. It's a job tougher than being President; I understand that. But by helping your public schools or helping any

school, it's helping fight evil with good. By being active citizens in your church or your synagogue or, for those Muslims, in your mosque, and adhering to the admission to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself, that's how we can stand up. It is the momentum of millions of acts of kindness that take place all across America. That's how we stand up to evil.

And if any country can do it, it is this country, because this is a nation that is loving and strong, compassionate, God-fearing, a nation that will not relent when it comes to our most precious value, and that value is freedom.

Thanks for having me, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:41 a.m. in Exhibit Hall A at the Colorado Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Lynn Cornwell, past president, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and Kenneth Engelbrecht, foreman at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX. The President also referred to EQIP, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 2

The President returned from Camp David, MD, to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that on February 1 the President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter ice storm on January 30 and continuing.

February 4

In the morning, the President had intelligence briefings and then met with Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov of Russia in the Oval Office.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton